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FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY  
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INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NIAMEY 000112

DEPT FOR AF/W, AF/RSA AND DS

PLS PASS TO USAID FOR AFR/W  
PLS PASS TO TSCTP COLLECTIVE

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SCUL](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PTER](#) [NG](#)  
SUBJECT: SULTAN OF AGADEZ CALLS ON AMBASSADOR

Ref: Niamey 00090

1. (SBU) Summary: During a February 12 luncheon, the Sultan of Agadez told Ambassador that the security situation in Niger's north had improved, with fewer abuses by the military, although sporadic attacks by rebels and smugglers continued. His efforts to get insurgents to cease their hostilities, however, had not succeeded, and the conflict had destroyed tourism, harming the region's economy. Although there were missed opportunities to discuss peace with MNJ members in Tripoli last year, he is now working on an upcoming peace conference in Niamey (reftel). Regarding Qadafi's AU chairmanship, the Sultan said growing international recognition of Tripoli had made his leadership more palatable to African nations. End summary.

2. (SBU) On February 12, Elhadji Ibrahim Oumarou, Sultan of Agadez, paid a courtesy call on Ambassador Allen. The Ambassador and the Sultan discussed issues relating to security in northern Niger, how it affects the local economy, and prospects for the restoration of peace in the region. The Ambassador received the Sultan and his two sons Mohamed and Ousmane, DCM Whitaker, and Political FSN Idi Moussa (note taker) for lunch at the Official Residence (CMR). Following are the Sultan's responses to our questions.

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Sultan: Security in North Improved, Conflict Disruptive  
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3. (SBU) The Sultan said that the security situation in Niger's north had improved overall, despite sporadic attacks by presumed Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice (MNJ) members and other armed robbers and smugglers. He stated that on many occasions he had called upon those "young people who took arms" (referring to the MNJ) to stop their militancy in the best interests of the region and the country as a whole. "They would listen and stop for a while, and then resume," he said. The Sultan mentioned that the conflict had seriously affected economic activities in Agadez and destroyed one of the region's vital sectors - tourism.

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Libya: Missed Opportunities and Qadafi's AU Chairmanship  
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4. (SBU) In August-September 2008, Libyan leader Qadafi invited several Saharan traditional chiefs and other community leaders to Tripoli on the occasion of Libya's national day. During his stay in Libya, the Sultan attempted to establish contact with MNJ leaders also there who occasionally called on him to pay their respects, but was not able to meet with them.

5. (SBU) When asked whether African leaders would trust Qadafi as AU Chairman, the Sultan said that African leaders had no reason to be reluctant, because several Western powers had resumed relations with Libya - including the United States - and therefore Africans could

do the same.

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Sultan: Rising Interest in Peace for the North  
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¶16. (SBU) Last year, community members expressed their concerns to the Sultan about the fighting in the north and its consequences, especially the military's abuses against civilians. According to the Sultan, there were fewer complaints this year.

¶17. (SBU) Regarding efforts to end the two-year conflict, the Sultan said that a peace forum would be possible, and that he was conducting consultations with authorities in Niamey to carry out this initiative.

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Voter Registration and Elections  
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¶18. (SBU) On the issue of whether potential voters in the Agadez region would be able to complete formalities required to fully participate in local, legislative and Presidential elections currently planned for 2009 (exact timing still to be determined), the Sultan noted that citizens were able to register in the larger cities in the Agadez region. He said he and his family members were among the many residents in Agadez who had completed the registration process. He added that he expects citizens who wish to vote will be able to return to the same locations in the larger cities to vote when elections are officially launched.

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Biodata and Cultural Notes  
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¶19. (U) Elhadji Ibrahim Oumarou assumed the sultanacy on October 3, 1961, to replace his deceased father, Sultan Oumarou. Since the 16th century, Sultans of Agadez have been Hausas from southern Niger, as the various Tuareg clans that ruled in the Air Mountain region at that time were unable to choose a leader from among themselves, and decided to import a non-Tuareg outsider to govern and keep peace. Sultan Ibrahim currently serves as president of the association of traditional chiefs of Niger.

¶10. (U) The Sultan is a paramount chief, head of all traditional chiefs in a region; he is a repository of traditional values as well as a religious leader and point of coordination to the government. He has full authority to enforce customary law, based on the Koran and traditional moral values.

¶11. (SBU) In 2001, Sultan Ibrahim participated in a U.S.-sponsored tourism promotion visit to the United States; in 2003 the Special Self-Help Fund supported building and equipping a computer training center for girls within the Sultan's compound in Agadez.

ALLEN